



Testimony of Victoria O'Neill
Member, Connecticut Prevention Network and
Program Coordinator, The Hub
In SUPPORT of
S.B 368 AN ACT CONCERNING SUICIDE PREVENTION
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE , March 14th, 2022

Senator Anwar, Representative McCarthy Vahey, and Members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Victoria O'Neill and I am Program Coordinator with The Hub and here in my capacity today as member of the Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN). CPN is the coalition of the five Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations and other prevention organizations who are focused on substance abuse and mental health prevention efforts

I am here today to support of S.B 368 An Act Concerning Suicide Prevention.

In a 2020 regional needs assessment, commonly referred to as our Priority Report, The Hub found startling rates of mental health and suicide among local, regional and state levels. This comprehensive collection of data found that suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in our state and unfortunately, 359 individuals in our state lost their lives to suicide. However, recognized organizations such as the QPR Institute promote the idea that "suicide can be preventable". Therefore, legislation such as S.B 368 is vital - not only to maintain the work begun by CT SAB, but to also, and more importantly, save the lives of those in our communities who struggle.

The Hub, a division of Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP), is the state designated RBHAO for Region 1, the southwestern portion of Connecticut. A large portion of our work surrounds supporting and coordinating mental health and suicide prevention initiatives including the facilitation of the Regional Suicide Advisory Board for the Region. We also fund and support 14 Local Prevention Councils throughout the region, most of whom continue to disperse and disseminate these initiatives in our communities.

The mental health and wellness of children is a priority of both the Statewide and Region wide Suicide Advisory Boards. Both entities recognize that children's mental health is often inextricably intertwined with that of the prominent adults of their lives. Therefore, it is vital to build a network of support across the lifespan continuum to allow for all entities to thrive. CT SAB does just this.

I am available to answer any questions and look forward to working with the committee on this issue further.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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